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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

February 8, 1996

The Honorable William J. Clinton
 President of the United States
 The White House
 Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I feel obliged to convey to you, sir, my grave concern about a troubling matter that has been steadily worsening for more than a year. There have been consistent reports in the media detailing extensive U.S. government documentation of China's sales of missile technology and equipment to Iran -- equipment that is, to the best of my understanding, specifically and unmistakably covered under the terms of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

There has been parallel evidence of Iran's building a formidable conventional and non-conventional arsenal over a period of years, the extent of which is impossible to ignore.

I have learned that Iranian-Chinese missile cooperation and transfers were the subject of high-level meetings within your Administration this week. While the conclusions drawn at these meetings have not been reported to me officially, I am informed unofficially that there was virtually unanimous agreement that sufficient evidence exists to determine, pursuant to Section 73 of the Arms Export Control Act, that China has knowingly exported MTCR-controlled equipment and technology to Iran.

Waiting for further evidence against China or Iran is both unnecessary and dangerous. It merely delays the inevitable, and is unfair to American businesses who must make important financial decisions based upon your determination.

Mr. President, I have commended your willingness to get tough on Iran. Your Executive Order of May 6, 1995 was right on target in stating that Iran poses an "unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States", a threat characterized by "continuing support for international terrorism, including acts that undermine the Middle East peace process, as well as its intensified efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction".

In the face of growing evidence regarding China's role in Iran's weapons drive, and the clear legal requirement that sanctions be levied against China for its missile sales to Iran, I appeal to you to act decisively. Though the pressures on you to waive the required sanctions will

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be enormous, it would be impossible to overly emphasize the vital importance of balancing U.S. national security against commercial interests.

In this case, Mr. President, there can be no doubt that China's providing advanced missile technology and equipment to Iran unquestionably poses a direct threat to essential U.S. national security interests -- and in particular to friends and allies of the United States throughout the Middle East.

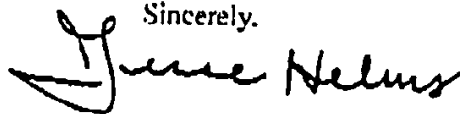
Twice in the past five years, the United States has imposed sanctions on China for violations of the MTCR. And twice in the same period, the United States has waived those sanctions in exchange for promises from Beijing to cease its violations. Despite those promises, China's violations of the MTCR have not only continued, but worsened.

Mr. President, in foreign policy as in our personal lives, we become a part of what we condone. When the United States acquiesces in acts of proliferation, those decisions send unmistakable signals to the rogue regimes of the world. The United States has now sent such signals twice. We must not do it a third time.

Mr. President, non-proliferation laws were written and enacted with precisely such violations in mind. To comply with the letter of the law while obviating its intent and impact with a waiver -- and to do so without any a priori demonstration on the part of the Chinese that they have substantively modified their behavior -- is a duplicitous mockery of U.S. commitments to counter-proliferation.

These are perilous times in the U.S. - China relationship; the Beijing government must be made to understand -- immediately and in no uncertain terms -- that the United States cannot and will not longer tolerate its destabilizing proliferation activities.

Sincerely,



cc: The Honorable Anthony Lake
The Honorable Warren M. Christopher
The Honorable Ronald H. Brown
The Honorable John Deutch